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FANBOY!

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FANBOY!™ 2

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Published By
Jam Comics Group
PO Box 56086
Chicago, IL
60656-0086

E-Mail:
Fanboy
(America On Line)

WVSW45A
(Prodigy)

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"...typos and all."

Printed In USA

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Do You Know Me?

"It was like a war --not just the battle but the very fact of the marvels themselves. A war —or some freakish, violent storm. And all we could do —all anyone could do — was hold fast and hope to ride it out."

With those words, Phil Sheldon records for all posterity the coming of the Age of Marvels, the very birth of a new American mythology that still continues to grow. Howdy again, friends of the inner sanctum. This is your host, welcoming you in through the squeaking door of time and space. Last ish took us into the world of cybercomics, cd-rom gaming and into the strange, new, new, new world of comic creators on the cusp of the rapidly approaching 21st century. This issue takes us way back in the way-back machine, to a time and place that many of us only dream about or have heard about in whispers and memories and on yellowing scraps of paper. This time, we're at the birth of it all, the golden age of the late 30's and forties. Who better to guide us then a REAL participant, Sheldon Moldoff, whose work represents the best of the moment.

Continued on page 2

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* - BBS stands for Bulletin Board System.

Do You Know Me?

Continued from page 1

We sometimes forget that there were people —millions of people— who thought like us, lived like us, dreamt of a better tomorrow like us ...and they all lived for generations before us. Has anything really changed in the hearts and minds of the human race? What was it like to be a creator of heroes while multitudes of brave young people marched off into war? Sheldon Moldoff knows, and he's talking to you, fanboy. By the way, it was a weird coincidence that Steve Darnall's piece on Shelly would fall in the same issue as our ode to Alex; Steve wrote the first concepts of MARVELS. Check out his work in Marvel Age 130-. *We* knew ya had it, Steverino!

Now streak forward into the year 1992 when two young talents join forces in reliving the greatest moments of comics from 1939 until now. Big project? Not too big for these guys. For the first time, hear artist Alex Ross discuss his love of Marvel's silver age and what it took to not only bring it to life one last time, but to do it better then anyone dared imagine. The series is called MARVELS and trust me, pilgrim, this is Marvel's finest hour. After this one, everything else is small. 'Course, that's easy for me to say. I'm Phil...

Mad Marcus

Special thanks to: Cat Yronwode, Larry Parr, Alex Ross, Shelly, Chrystal, Gary Guzzo, Amy Meyer and Tom DeFalco, Touchstone Pictures.

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This Silver Age Spidey Can Be Yours FREE

When I was a young lad, I bought this book for the unheard of price of 12¢ and lovingly pressed it into a hardcover Tintin book that was then put in a box and forgotten until recently. Talk about a find! This vintage 1967 issue features Romita art and stars the Kingpin at his nastiest! Of course there's a catch. You'll have to enter this, our FANBOY! issue 2 contest...and you can't use a xerox of this page, either. To take a chance at winning this near-mint copy of The Amazing Spider-Man #52, you'll need to answer a few questions and get this back ASAP. Contest will end when next issue hits the stands, so enter often (ie: buy a lot of copies). Oh, and to make things even more interesting, I'll throw in two more silver age books to two more lucky winners. Don't know what they'll be yet, but I'll print the list of winners in Issue 4 (should we last so long) and upload it to AOL, Prodigy, and the Comics BBS.

FANBOY! Contest 2 PO Box 56086 Chicago, IL 60656

Name_____ Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Phone_____ Age___ Local retailer_____

Own a PC?____ Mac?____ Modem?____ Online Service?_____

Favorite comic book_____ Artist_____ Writer_____

true hype

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Henry Selick, director of Nightmare says, "The effect is a bit like opening a pop-up book or finding a great illustration in a story book that feels like you can reach in and touch it or fall right into it."

Fanboy: Do you prefer live-action or stop-motion? Your background is primarily stop-motion and experimental forms of animation.

Selick: Good stop-motion animation with the right elements --lighting, camera moves, characters, etc. --can evoke the same powerful feelings as live-action and can be more effective than traditional cel or computer animation. In this film, it allowed us to be more extreme in the look and design of our characters than live-action ever could."

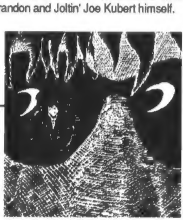
What a concept! What a cast! 230 sets over 19 stages with eight camera crews working 'round the clock. Director of photography Pete Kozachik is an expert in his own right, but add Selick, known for the Pillsbury Doughboy and other animated classics, plus Producer Denise Di Novi (Edward Scissorhands and Batman Returns), add Co-Producer Kathleen Gavin (Disney's Oliver & Company, Rescuers Down Under plus a stint with Chicago's St. Nicholas Theatre) *plus* the talents of character actor William Hickey, Danny Elfman, Paul Reubens, Catherine O'Hara and Chris Sarandon.... Need we say more? Happy, happy, joy, joy!

Spidey webbed his way across the Hudson to offer his personal congrats to Brandon Vietti, the first recipient of the newly established Marvel Comics Scholarship to the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art. Shown here are the old web-head with Brandon and Joltin' Joe Kubert himself.

NICKELODEON

Ren + Stimpy™ "You Eediot!"

One of the pitfalls of product licensing is that once your product lands in the bargain bins, your name goes with it. So, pity those poor characters Ren and Stimpy. Once cool, now commercial, these animated originators of booger jokes have had a rough life under the eyes of Nickelodeon and parent company MTV. This terrible compilation of music barely justifies being put to vinyl, much less being sold as a full-length cd. They could'a priced it at $1.98, but at full-retail, it blows hairballs. Billy West performs the voices of both characters as lifelessly as a mannequin doing Cheech and Chong. 45 minutes of very offensive, humorless material with only 14 of them as recognizable tv tunes. Stinky, stinky, poo, poo...



©Neil Gaiman

Yes, that's a Neil Gaiman original used on the Literacy Chicago "thank you" cards sent to contributors at the last Chicago Con. The 19th Annual Art You Can Read Auction raised $7500 and helped them instruct over 400 students this past summer.

e-mailbag

I have a question for Doug Rice and Hilary Barta.Do you expect to be taken seriously if your most recent work is a silly parody?
-The Neophyte (Jason Morrison)
Fanboy: Apparently, Image blew a gasket over their book, so we didn't bother to ask.

From: RSHARER@delphi.com aka: Rick Sharer
Mark, Just to drop a line to say I picked up Fanboy #1. I'd originally seen it advertised on Prodigy (when I was still there), and was eagerly anticipating it. But for this reason I had been posting 'Adventures of Fanboy' stories on Prodigy once a week for 25 straight weeks, and now a new company will be publishing the parody of "the age of gimmick glut" in an anthology called"Ventures of the Virulent" beginning in January. The company is called'VIRTUE' and plans to give AOF its own book a few months later. So, as I said, I was looking forward to your journal to maybe get things going in that direction. I thought the interviews were great, attributed specifically to the questions that were asked! But the question I have is...how does a 'Fanboy' fit here? Now maybe if you'd interviewed Liefeld...<G> Anyway, if you get the chance to read AOF and truly believe in the gimmick glut and its negative effect on the industry, I'd love a chance to spill my guts about it. And your mag would be the PERFECT vehicle. Thanks for cyber-reading.
Also from Rick:
Re: Prodigy: Still on it? Nope. I cancelled in June, before the big price hike. I now operate on Delphi, with a Free month of CompuServe sitting in a box in the corner of my office. <G> What blows about Prodigy? Several things come to mind. First would be their INCONSISTENT censoring policy. Some people would use so much profanity it'd make a sailor blush (and get away with it), while others would have posts returned just for typing the word, 'dang'! The main problem was the incredible price hike. With the current system in place, would have gone from $15/month to $220/month...I don't think so. I have heard rumors that P is going back to a flat fee soon...JUST a rumor, but who knows? Too little too late for me.

From: Nanci2749
Re: issue 1 I was really impressed — a good read, nice casual writing style and a classier cover than I expected (I thought it would all be newsprint.) My hubby disagrees with you on Donna Matrix. He didn't like it for most of the same reasons you liked — but your article made him pull it out and read it again. Something tells me you're going to piss off everyone in the industry one of these days.
Fanboy: You're right; I've already had a good start. But I'm not too upset about what editors think of me.

Dear Mark,
I was looking through the online member descriptions and I noticed that you are interested in comics. I would like to introduce my company to you (assuming you haven't heard of us). We are Manic Press, and we currently produce two titles: Catseye and ENTS. Catseye is a full color action book set in the far future and revolves around a team of characters led by Catseye, a bare-footed red-suited adventurer! ENTS is a black and white collection of short stories and comics, the content of which changes to introduce new characters and potential titles. Catseye is going into its first year in print now, with ENTS at #4! Our following is growing, but we would like to have more readers enjoy our work! So! Here's hoping you'll take a minute to look for Catseye and ENTS in your local Comic Book shop! If you can't find it, please ask the shop owner to order a few from his distributor (we are served by 10 distributors, so s/he should have no problem ordering us)! Thank you for reading! We hope you find Catseye and ENTS to be a lot of fun!
Warmest regards, Dana Basken, Rich Plasse

From: DoodleBabe
It's a funny business (uh, no pun intended). Some people get in by the seat of their pants (have you read Scott (Dilbert) Adams bio posted on the Dilbert section [of AOL]; it sounds like he was syndicated weeks after his first cartoon) , but almost everyone else ends up scrabbling at it for years. Guess that's where I'll fit in. I've kind of turned my back on the first strip — the one I've posted in Your Cartoons (on AOL)— and am working up a second. And so it goes.

From: MKHill @aol
As a previous publisher of a small print-run paper, I know how tough this work is.
Best of Luck!

Another one from: PadBro
so i am white and male, am I part of the problem.? i am starting a comic production company with people on line. except the sex(yes over 20% are women) all other aspects are unknown. I don't know how old these people are or what race they are. If the story or art are good who cares. you want to talk about WHY? then why are there so many asian artists with their names out. Maybe 3 or 4 artists are let on to be black by the companies (marvel/DC) it is as if they do not exist. These people should be publicly praised for the work they do and should be USED by these companies to give all types of kids role models.
If you think you can get more recognition for women & blacks in comix then i wish you luck and if you need an extra voice this White/Male is with you. Padbro

(continued on page 17)

Creating Comics

There are six steps to comic publishing and some of them are pretty steep

There was a great line delivered in *Calvin & Hobbs* that went something like "look at the committee that drew this comic book." It's true; the production of sequential art takes a lot of effort by more then one set of hands. The idea of a one-man shop producing a comic book is unrealistic. Ask any small independent publisher who tries it and you're bound to hear tales of disappointment and frustration.

Charles Moisant of Oak Park, Illinois pulled together new and established talent for the third issue of his comic book *Kremin*. The book featured a four-color cover with black and white interior, typical fare for an independent, but it represented months of planning as well as saving to pay the artists and printer. Completed and ready to print, Moisant solicited *Kremin* and got a good response, so he lined up the printer and printed one thousand copies only to see it listed by the distributor accompanied by a panel from *Faustus*, a "sex and satan" comic that was a far cry from his G-rated superhero. "I was devastated," said Moisant, "I mean, all of that work —shot—with one mistake."

Whether it's an independent book or a Marvel title, it's still just newsprint and cheap entertainment; it was designed as a quick read for GI's. My father, who introduced me to *Sad Sack*, said that it was standard reading material by Marines in Korea. They called it "latrine literature," and when it finished it's usefulness as light entertainment, it ended up serving another purpose altogether.

While the books of the 90's are printed on better stock, the structure of creating a comic book essentially remains the same: divvy the work up among several people and crank it out fast. Ask any artist who has worked in the trenches and you'll hear, sooner or later, about a book that lost some of its spark due to budget, production scheduling or editors who don't give a damn.

There are seven pre-press steps to comic publishing:

1. Scripting
2. Roughs
3. Pencils

4. Lettering

5. Inks

6. Coloring

There's a seventh step that we'll explore later over an Alka Seltzer: getting paid.

Scripting begins the process of storytelling by taking a concept and breaking it down in a page-by-page, panel-by-panel format. In the case of Marvel's *X-Men*, the stories are formed in brainstorming sessions between the artists and writers of several "X" books. That allows for cross-overs and good continuity if and when a plotline changes the structure of that particular "universe". A good example of this kind of cross-over thinking occurred with DC's *Superman*. Issue 75 may have seen the man of steel bite the dust, but you'd need copies of Justice League, Action and an easy dozen others to follow the whole thing. The name of the game is not to write an epic, it's to write a best-seller.

Larry Parr's writing credits include long lists of some of the hottest animation on television (*GI Joe, Smurfs, Spider-Man, Beetlejuice, Transformers, Real Ghostbusters, Peter Pan and the Pirates* to name just a few). In 1990, he took some of his writing expertise to comics . His views on creating for the media: "When writing for television, everyone from the director to the janitor felt vindicated in making changes and tearing it apart. It happened constantly in television. The shows that are good have a dictator who says what goes and what doesn't. Art isn't a democratic process, it is an autocratic process and television doesn't lend itself to an autocratic style. That's why so little that appears on television passes for art."

"Comics were very different for me; they left me pretty much alone. The only negative thing was that I never got paid all that they owed me." Parr also added that while material that is generated by committee has become commonplace, "it doesn't offend anybody but it doesn't challenge or excite anyone, either."

Once plotlines are arranged and scripted, the job of visualizing the story falls to the penciller. Usually, the penciller begins with a "thumbnail" or some loose mini-sketches to map out movement. These may go back to the editor for a review before anything tight gets put to paper.

When I did some *Looney Tunes* pages for DC, roughs were faxed back and forth several times before I got an approval just to proceed to tight pencils. While many superhero books might allow for an artist's interpretive vision of a character, there is no room for change with licensed characters like *Bugs Bunny* or *Ghostbusters*. "Warners', their licensing agents, and their production facilities all pass judgement on our work," wrote comic book and cartooning veteran Howard Post during his stint at DC editing *Looney Tunes* and *Tiny Toon Adventures*. "The singularly most destructive influence on our getting a book out is a hold-up for approval from any one of 3 layers of 'approvers'." "This works hell with the artist and stops our production dead."

"Andy Warhol pieced out a lot of his work. A lot of his work was done by others simply to carry it out in an assembly-line fashion. I don't think that takes away from (comics) being art at all."

"In America we don't treat art as art, we treat art as commerce."

Final pencils are done at 10 X 15" with graphic novels at varying sizes (10 1/2 by 14 7/8"). Once final pencils are done and approved, photocopies are made for dialog balloon placement and sent to a letterer. Working with rapidiographs, markers, brushes, lettering guides, french curves and circle templates, the letterer brings dialog into the artwork by placing it inside the panel while trying not to interrupt the flow of action.

25 year-old Joseph Allen's track record as letterer/colorist/inker and recently as a contributing artist for Reactor's *Donna Matrix* reads like a who's who of comic independents. Beginning as a staff artist for Now Comics at 19, Allen's reputation for reliable delivery has kept a steady —if not sometimes overwhelming— amount- of work coming in for the past five years. Now with numerous books in his portfolio as well as composing music and making creative contributions to several CD-ROM titles, Joe reflects on his lettering days:

"It's pretty much a very thankless job. Quick turn-around is what they're looking for. They (publishers) pretty much give you some idea for (dialog) balloon placement, but that depends on how busy they are. Since most of them know me, they trust my judgement if I move something, or sometimes they might not give me any guides at all." Materials are then fed-ex'ed back to the publisher and handed over to the inker.

An inker can enhance the original pencils or bury them under blankets of india ink —and once it's done, there's no turning back. Like the letterer, an inker needs the right tools and a ton of circle and oval templates. While companies like Marvel and DC provide their own paper (2-ply bristol) to their artists, most small independents don't and the results can be devastating. From my personal files under "books from hell" was an inking assignment that came in with pencils done on three different kinds of stock. I couldn't use standard Pelikan ink because it bled —very slowly. The other boards had a finish that almost repelled ink. When I tried erasing anything, the ink went with it. I ended up switching to Pelikan acetate ink which dried fast and worked well, but was murder to work with because the heavy pigment clogged my Speedball pens and hardened in a heartbeat. Garbage in, garbage out.

Norm Dwyer, whose pencils and inks are some of the best in comics *(Star Trek, S.H.I.E.L.D, Speed Racer, Ghostbusters, Twilight Zone, Libby Ellis,* and the digital book we covered in issue 1: *Donna Matrix)* reflects on the industry: "We're (pencillers and inkers) more cogs in the machine. The penciller shapes the look of the book and the property more than anyone. The real responsibilities fall on the shoulders of the pencillers. On the other hand, the inkers are so often called the 'embellishers." They can certainly destroy a book but they can also add to it. The fundamentals are an excellent penciller and an excellent writer and that's the most important thing."

Inks are sent back to the editor for final approval and if all goes well, they will be sent to camera. Color books differ at this point. Some publishers make photostats and send these to a colorist for markup. The colorist, usually working from model sheets, indicate correct use of color blends that will be done on computer, scanned in and separated on press. However, some books shoot the inked page and make a contact print on watercolor paper. In this process, there is a third artist involved with the real look of the book: the colorist/painter.

Once photographed on watercolor stock, the hard "inked" line appears in non-reproductive blue and serves as an invisible guideline for a colorist's magic touch. Colorist Holly Sanfelippo: "From my experience over the past five years, colorists are considered the last person on the bottom rung

of the ladder. People think that all of the hard work is done by the time the artwork reaches the colorist, but seeing the book in black and white, I know how the product looks after we give it our expertise. I realize that color can make or break a book. Some books can look beautiful in black and white, like *Black Kiss*. That book is incredible; it's absolutely stunning. Then again, you have certain styles of art that, without color, are very lifeless and dead and really show nothing. There the colorist sets the whole stage: dark lighting a mysterious scene with a lot of blues or an action scene with a lot of reds and yellows. A colorist brings the whole thing to life. We (at Now Comics) use Martin's dyes, hand-paint and airbrush and get such a variety of color and tonality, we're very lucky to be doing it the traditional way. The last few issues of the *Green Hornet* have been my baby. By the time I get it, the pencilling and inking is really there, and my coloring is there to work with it, but I've worked on projects where it was, 'Oh my God, Holly! Please color it! It needs help!' But right now, the *Green Hornet* is my favorite and working on it is a real pleasure."

Once colored, the creative end of the book is closed. The artists all go on to another project and hope they get paid for their efforts. Major players like DC, Marvel and Malibu all have timetables for payment and they're never late. Independents are another story. Last year in Chicago alone, there were three comic companies and all of them had reputations for nonpayment. A year later, two of them remain and while some problems were resolved, some artists are filing down bullets and hoping to get a clean shot at a publisher or two. Rule of thumb: read your contract, keep your ears open and talk to other creatives in the same boat.

Barring any setbacks, the book will be printed and shipped to distributors and hawked by local comic shops and neighborhood newsstands along with Betty Page trading cards and packages of junk food. Some of it will be brilliant, some of it will be the kind of crud that parents blanch at discovering under their child's mattress, but all of it is the stuff dreams are made of. It's creative and crude, often too violent and almost always warped, sexist and stupid —but is it really bad? Only, as reflected upon by the following industry personnel, if true creativity gets crushed in the process.

Larry Parr: "I was at a Con once with Harlan Ellison and he commented that he could understand when an editor edited out for space, but not where an editor added what he thought was better material. In America we don't treat art as art, we treat art as commerce."

Holly Sanfelippo: "From my experience, comics are definitely a commercial product. Merchandising is important and so is marketing. Andy Warhol pieced out a lot of his work. A lot of his work was done by others simply to carry it out in an assembly-line fashion. I don't think that takes away from (comics) being art at all. From my viewpoint, if they are extremely clever or extremely beautiful or extremely powerful, what else do you need them to be?' Art doesn't have to be perfect, so why does the comic book industry have to be perfect? That's asking too much."

Joe Allen: "I'd say to try to ignore all of the negativity of it and if you enjoy it, just do it."

Norm Dwyer: "Independents are the only area that comics can be truly thought of as an art form. Otherwise it's like making a product —like making toasters on an assembly line— and unfortunately, that's what it is."

FANCY!!

NEXT ISSUE. SEXISM AND RACISM IN THE COMIC INDUSTRY. PLUS: VIOLENCE IN COMICS GETS QUESTIONED. IF YOUR LOCAL STORE DOESN'T CARRY IT, SOCK THE JERK AND ORDER DIRECT. $1.50 U.S. TO. PO BOX 56086. CHICAGO. IL 60656

FROM HAWKS TO BATS

Sheldon Moldoff's Legacy Of Gold

by Steven Darnall

The writers and artists of the Golden Age of Comics have two vital things in common: 1)they were working in a field that was so new as to have no firm artistic limits or boundaries; and 2)they were almost universally screwed. It was rare when an artist or writer had his name attached to his creation; it was even more rare when a successful creation would assure the artist of a financially secure future.

Creating *The Black Pirate* (and co-creating *Hawkman*) did not make Shelly Moldoff a rich man, which is especially sad when one considers how much richer the comics world is for his contributions. His ability to ape the styles of other artists made him a valuable "utility-man" for deadline-crazy editors, but he was able to digest those styles as well. He spent most of the 1950's and 60's ghosting for Bob Kane on *Batman*, but as he pointed out in our discussion, many fans always thought they saw "a little bit of Moldoff in there."

I had the good fortune to talk with Mr. Moldoff at the Chicago Comicon last July 4. He was a fount of information, and considering our interview was nearly killed by an errant tape recorder, he was the soul of patience. At several points in our discussion, he expressed his gratitude to the new generation of fans who've learned about him through the (long overdue)credits attached to his work. It's a privilege and honor to present what we believe to be the first major interview with this Golden Age great.

FANBOY: You're from New York originally, right?

MOLDOFF: Yeah, I was born in Manhattan in 1920, and I guess that was fortunate for me, because as I grew up and comic books started, they were all in New York. 99% of them, and all I had to do was get on the subway and get off at a different station, and there was a publisher.

Were comics something you'd always wanted to do?

Well, let's say cartoons were something I'd always wanted to do...

True. There weren't really "comics" as we know them today.

Right, right. I loved *Popeye*, I loved *Betty Boop* and *The Katzenjammer Kids*. It was newspaper strips that were the important things, gag cartoons in magazines, and so as you grew up, you either wanted to be a newspaper cartoonist or a magazine cartoonist; maybe a sports cartoonist, and that was the field.

Interestingly enough, when I was about ten, I was drawing Popeye or Betty Boop on the so-called sidewalks of New York, and a fellow who lived in my building--who I didn't know--came over to me and said "Would you like to learn how to draw cartoons?" We went across to Bronx Park, sat on a bench, and he showed me how to start with circles and all that...

That fellow was Bernard Baily, who I met years later at DC. He was a very talented artist; he did The Spectre and Hourman. I started to work for DC and I was so proud, and he was too. He was a friend of mine, and I had a real respect for his

ability. I think he's one of the few names that really doesn't get the attention he should've, because he was a very good artist. *Excellent* artist.

That's a great example of how people make connections in this world, whether they mean to or not.

That's right, that's right. Particularly in New York, where it was all centered. That's how I met Bob Kane. Someone had said he knew Bob Kane, he had just started Batman, he's looking for someone to do backgrounds, and he lived in the East Bronx, I lived in the West Bronx. So I got on a trolley and went over to see him, and I worked with him for 6-7 months at the very beginning of Batman.

Batman really took off, and Bob and I became friends, and even though I left after those...seven months, or whatever it was, because I started to get work on my own, we stayed in touch, and that was part of my career, and a big part later on, because...if you want, I can just jump briefly. In 1953, I met him again, and he said "I need an assistant. Do you want to ghost my stuff?"

Now, a lot of people don't know what a ghost is. An assistant helps the artist, and the artist will say "Oh, so-and-so is my assistant." In this case, when you're a ghost, *nobody* knows that you're working for this particular artist. You do the work, and you remain in the background.

And people have said "Why did you do that?" I said "Well, it was security." You know, I had a family of my own, and work was up and down, and months where sales were bad, you wouldn't get a script, and *Batman* was a steady job. So I took it, and we shook hands--we never had a contract--and I ghosted his stuff for 15 years, from '53 to '67, and nobody knew it. That was part of my job: "Just don't say anything."

And, in fact, during that period, he came up with an idea for a cartoon called

Courageous Cat & Minute Mouse, and I did that. I storyboarded it, I wrote it, I did 65 episodes of that. And many times during this thing, I would say "Can I put my name on it, Bob? Can't I put my name on it?" And he said "No." He didn't want any names on it.

So it wasn't until after I was through that people who are historians, who want to find out who did what, and it became an art to them, made it their business to find out and give proper credits, and I think we have to be thankful to those fellows.

Absolutely.

I would get calls or a letter saying "Were you connected with *Batman*? Because *Batman* 158 (or whatever); I detect Moldoff in there."(laughs) You know, something like that. So finally I said "Yes, I did. I was a ghost."

And in the case of Batman, *there were so many writers and artists involved. Bill Finger, for instance...*

Well, Bill Finger I knew very well. Very, very prolific writer, great ideas, and I think his name should have been up there too, from the very beginning, but Bob Kane's ego was such that he did not want *anybody's* name up there, except Bob Kane's.

Recently, Kane has said he regrets not giving credit to Bill Finger, and while that's an admirable sentiment, it's still coming a little late.

Well, it's like when Joe Shuster died, DC gave him all kinds of accolades. Well, you know, this man has made maybe a billion dollars for the company, and I feel he should have been treated a little bit better.

Well, you're not alone there.

I mean, he created the whole field! Superman started this whole field, there's no question about it. All of a sudden, Superman was part of everybody's dream, everybody's vision. And Batman followed, and I say those were the two big guns. They were the cornerstones of the industry. The industry was built around those two characters.

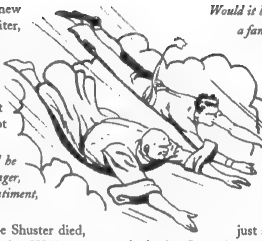
You were in your teens when you started as a cartoonist. Did you go straight to DC?

Yeah, Vincent Sullivan was editor at DC and I started doing filler pages. Oddity pages, you know?

Sure. 'Did you know...?' and so on.

Yeah, little things like that. And then I went down and met Sheldon Mayer and started doing regular strips in the magazines for him, and it went pretty fast, because all of a sudden, M.C. Gaines called me in to do Hawkman. Another artist had started it, he wasn't happy with him, and he said "You take it and do what you want with it." So I created what is known as the Golden Age Hawkman, and it took off, too. It was very popular, and I became a very close friend of Sheldon Mayer, and he wanted me to do the covers. I did the covers of Green Lantern, Flash and Hawkman.

It worked out well, they were very popular, and I come to these shows and I'm gratified when people...they remember these covers! It's really rewarding that they made such an impression on people.



Would it be safe to say you were a fan of Alex Raymond?

I was. Now you've gotta remember that we were starting in a field, most of us were just learning to draw, and I thought that Alex Raymond was just so much better than anybody else. Same thing with Hal Foster. This guy was an illustrator! I also loved Milton Caniff, although it was a completely different style. If you took his drawings and analyzed them, they weren't anatomically correct, but when he finished with his brush, and the way he laid shadows in, it was real. It was like *Raiders of The Lost Ark*, in terms of the way the story went.

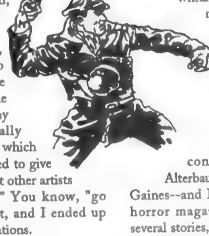
I loved those three, and I loved [Burne] Hogarth, who did *Tarzan*, and I tried to make my work, particularly Hawkman, stand up with those. I wanted it to be as good, if I could. I spent a lot of time on the drawings, I did a lot of research, I studied anatomy on my own, I have books on anatomy, which I still have. If I drew a leg or an arm, I wanted it to be real. And I think it came through, because people loved those pages.

Then I would take a script and break it up. I f it had six or eight panels on a page, sometimes I'd turn it into four or five, and Sheldon Mayer would be furious! He'd say "Look, we went to a lot of trouble writing and editing this story." I said "Shelly, look how much more *dramatic* it can be. Why have two panels when I can put the two balloons into the same panel, and have twice as much space to make a great drawing?"

And he had a lot of trouble with that. Sheldon Mayer was basically a cartoonist--at that time he was doing *Scribbly*, and *Sugar and Spike*--and he didn't visualize action or adventure stories as being dramatic, and I thought that breaking them up, having an arm or leg out of a panel was exciting. And we ended up...When I went into the service in '44, we were not on the best of terms. Before that,

©1938 DC & Jack Kirby

we'd gone horseback riding together, we'd double-dated, but I had different views than he did. When I came out of the service[in 1946], the first thing I did was go back to M.C. Gaines, where Sheldon Mayer was still the editor, and I said "I want my old strips back"--basically Hawkman and Black Pirate, which I had created. And he refused to give them to me. He said "I've got other artists doing it, and I'm happy." You know, "go elsewhere." I was very hurt, and I ended up eventually at Fawcett Publications.



What did you do at Fawcett?

At Fawcett I did *Captain Midnight*, *Don Winslow of the Navy*, I did *Tex Ritter*. I became very friendly with the editor, Will Lieberson, and I did a couple Captain Marvel Jr. stories, and eventually I sold a horror magazine to them, called *This Magazine Is Haunted*. That went on for a year or two, until Fawcett got into this lawsuit over Captain Marvel and Superman. They lost, and when they lost it, they felt they'd lost their big gun. To this day, I don't see any resemblance to Captain Marvel and Superman, but, you know, funny things happen in court, and it kind of broke their back. A lot of the executives at Fawcett were never happy with the comic book section anyway. They had other magazines, like *True Story*. They really did not want to be in the comic book field. Comic books always had a stigma about them, and so they filtered out the comic book section.

I think it was about that time I went back to Bob Kane, and then I went to National and met Jack Schiff, and he started giving me work.

I understand that during this period you also went to EC with an idea for a horror comic...

Yes. That was 1948. I still have all my records intact. That was after M.C. Gaines had died, and Bill Gaines took over the company, fresh out of college. I knew him, and I came to see him, and he said he was going to stay with the publishing for awhile, to see if they can make it; otherwise, they'll get out of the business. This was a period where sales in general were pretty low, all over.

I told him, "Bill, if I give you an idea which I think will sell, will you give me a percentage?" And he said "Absolutely." I had two magazines: one was *This Magazine Is Haunted*, and the other was *Tales of The Supernatural*. It was horror. I said "That's gonna be a trend, I can feel it." So he liked it and had his lawyer draw up a contract--a fellow named Dave Alterbaum, who I had known from M.C. Gaines--and I went ahead and produced this horror magazine, and Gardner Fox wrote several stories, Johnny Craig did the cover, and I brought it back to Bill. I said "Do you want me to start on the second one?" He said "No, I'll let you know," and that was it. Months go by, and I check with him. Nothing's happening.

And then about eight months down the road, I see *The Crypt of Terror* and *The Vault of Horror* on the newsstand.

Oh, my...

I said "My God!" I went running right down to Lafayette Street; he was still where his father was originally, and I said "Bill, what is this?"

He said "I knew you'd come down here." I said "Well, why not? I have a contract!"

So he said "Well, it isn't any good. I decided that I can't pay percentages. There's nothing you can do, Shelly, I'm sorry. You want work, I'll give you work, but I can't pay percentages."

I went to see Dave Alterbaum, and he put his arm around me and said "Shelly, you're young, chalk it off to experience, but you can't do anything about it. If you try, we'll blackball you in the business." Well, I'm only what--28 years old?--I'm shaking in my boots now.

And horror went on to sweep the industry. Bill did a great job on it; there's no questioning that, and I eventually sold the title to Fawcett, along with *Worlds of Fear*, *Worlds Beyond*, but I did not get the glory or the money that came with that big success, because horror swept everything. Now I've kept records of everything. I've got dates of when I submitted it. It was just one of those things. I should've had my own lawyer [to] look at the contract. I

think many artists and writers have made similar mistakes. There's always a way somebody can weasel out of something, or the judge'll say "Well, what do you want *me* to do?"[laughs]

Now, you told me that you'd started as Bob Kane's assistant in '38.

Right.

Did anyone —you or Bob— have any idea of how big this was going to be?

No. Nobody had any idea, although from the very beginning, Batman as a comic book began to take off [immediately]. Like Superman, it was an instant success, although nobody knew that it would be here 50 years later.

Right. An icon. Now, were you there for the first story?

The second or third story. Something like that. It was very, very close to the beginning that I was inking his backgrounds, lettering, you know, helping him.

Then you went on to do Hawkman and Black Pirate.

I got busy in my own right and left him. Now, by the same venue, nobody ever thought that Hawkman, the Flash, the Green Lantern and those things would still be here after 50 years.

Possibly because the medium you were in didn't really have a history and partially because people thought that the 10-year-olds who read it will outgrow it.

Yeah, like a passing fancy.

Sure, but it's got to be pretty flattering to think that those characters you've created can withstand the test of time.

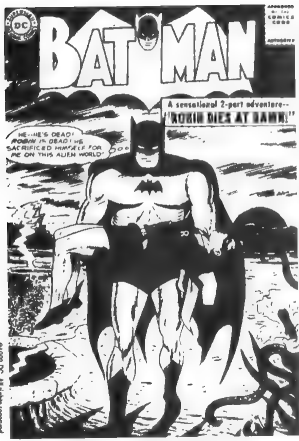
Well, yes. The best part of going to conventions is to meet all of these people, all of these fans through the years and new fans [as well as] old fans who tell you how much they appreciated it and still follow it. The stories are completely different today...

That's putting it mildly. When you were 18 and assisting Bob Kane and two years later it was apparent that you could draw in a style like Alex Raymond or Hal Foster...

I was self-taught and modeled my work after who I thought were the best illustrators in the business. I followed them and I followed the way Caniff told stories. I was an admirer of a great many illustrators of magazines and old pen and ink illustrators over the years. I tried to acquire whatever knowledge I could from studying them and their techniques.

When you found that you could draw in that style, was it frustrating to draw in Kane's style which was much cruder? I mean, did you ever find yourself thinking, "Boy, I could draw this much better then he can draw this?"

No, because it wouldn't look like Batman. See, when I left Batman in '39, he then had a series of assistants like Jerry Robinson, Schwartz, different fellas. At the same time, Detective Comics hired other artists to do Batman stories because Bob couldn't supply that many. There were two things going on: one was that you worked for Bob and the other was you worked for the company and they give you the scripts. I always worked for Bob. In that day, you tried to keep it very similar to what it was when it originated. Through the years it did evolve and change, which comes normally, but you could not suddenly make it look very illustrative like say, Alex Raymond or somebody else. It just wouldn't fit the character. It evolved. When I came back to Bob in 1953, we went through back issues and he picked out what he thought were the good heads and the good characters of Robin and Batman and the villains who were there at the time, and we modeled the style on what he would like best. So a style developed that he liked and I just kept doing it. Over a 15 year period, I'd say that it did begin to change, but not too much from the way it was way back [in the beginning]. You had to identify the character. I mean, when you picked up a book like Batman the way we did him in those days - it could be any character; Superman, Green Lantern, any character- it had to look like that character, whereas today, Batman, Superman are done by many, many artists and each one brings his own style and individuality and fans seem to accept them.


BAT MAN
A sensational 2-part adventure--
"ROBIN DIES AT DAWN!"
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There's less of a "in-house-look."

That's right. When I did Red Ryder or King of the Royal Mounted for the newspapers they'd say they want it to look like it does in the newspaper so it looks like the same artist did it. That's the way you would do it; you would imitate that style. Not everybody could do that. That's a trick in itself.

That's right. Now, the stories that came out of the 50's seem to lean more toward science fiction than to detective work. Did you or Bob say at any point, "Gee, this really is getting as far away from the character as it can," or did you just feel you'd go and "do the job because this was the script that they gave me"?

Well, this is the way that the editor wants it to go. You could argue with the editor, but I don't think it would've made any difference because the editor is going to go by sales. He's going to go where the trend is and he just sits down with the writers and says, "Look, that story about space sold pretty good, let's go with another space story" and that's the way it goes. It follows a pattern of what looks good in sales. When we came out with that story "Robin Dies At Dawn," that was a blockbuster. They loved it.

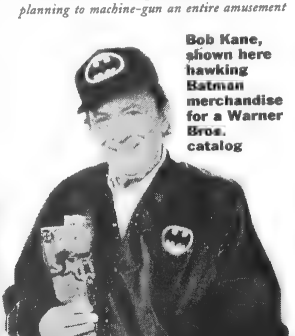
That's true, and that cover became a very archetypal cover.

Right, it's been done a dozen times since. Apparently, that idea was a sell-out. That's what the editor goes by and you get the story from the editor.

If it'd been a story about detective work that had sold very well, they'd probably have gone with that.

That's no guarantee, either. nobody knows what the public is going to do but them. The main thing that sustained Batman was the villains. They weren't terrible villains; they always came back, like Sherlock Holmes and Moriarity. He would best them and the Joker would live to return another day just like the Penguin and the Riddler. They were the big part of Batman's success.

It's interesting that in the stories you drew about those characters, usually the most malicious thing that any of them did was to rob a bank or a theatre and take a hostage while now you see them planning to machine-gun an entire amusement



Bob Kane, shown here hawking Batman merchandise for a Warner Bros. catalog

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park or some equally horrific thing.

Well, it amazes me that youngsters watch things like "Friday The 13th" and "Halloween." I don't know why it is that they want to see this destruction. It's really one continual nightmare and they seem to enjoy it.

I agree. Now, were you the sole creator of Courageous Cat and Minute Mouse?

No, no! Courageous Cat was Bob's idea. He went to the coast and he had this idea and his reputation, which was good. He met this fellow who was looking for a

different series for TV and he thought he could sell it. He came back from the coast and said, "look, I have something: Courageous Cat and Minute Mouse. Here are the characters, I need stories. Can you storyboard them? Can you write them?" I said, "Why not?" and so I wrote the stories and storyboarded them. They were 7 minute films and I think we did 65 or 70 of them. It ran a couple of seasons. It was popular.

After you left Batman in '67 you went on to do the Marco Polo film?

Right. I formed my own little company and we did an animated film called "Marco Polo, Junior." It was 80 minutes and it was done in Australia. The soundtracks and everything were done in New York City, but the actual animation was done in Australia. And then I did a couple of animated series for a Japanese outfit called Transglobal. I did 125 7-minute films. Then I did some films which were about Rembrandt, Mozart. These were all animated. I've done, I think, over 200 shorts.

So even though you've left the comic book scene, you've been very active creatively.

I left comic books and went into animation, then moved to Florida. They did an article about me here and I got a call from somebody at Shoney's (Big Boy) restaurants. They asked me if I'd be interested in doing a Big Boy comic book and I said ok. I did that for a number of years [as well as a Red Lobster comic which they did for a number of years]. They would come out every month and kids loved them. That was more of an animated sort of style.

Is there any favorite story during that time when you were ghosting Batman that sort of exemplifies what you were doing at that time? That may be an unfair question since you guys did hundreds of stories.

I did, as I say, over 5000 pages, but I don't think any one of them impressed me more than any other. I'd say in general, it was a job...period. It was a job to pick up the script, break it down and get it back to them on time because the very nature of the business is deadlines and rushes and that sort of thing, but I don't think, along the way, that I ever really said anything about it. Maybe because my name was never on it. I was working, more or less, with a secret identity.

You told me last week that Julius Schwartz told you that he had always hoped to do a book with you and years later found out that he had.

That was a very nice way to introduce me to the crowd who, years ago, didn't know me from a hole in the wall. I appreciated that and I think he appreciated that it was time to let this fella have his day in the sun. Everybody appreciates that.

Do you keep up with that crowd anymore? Do you see Julius Schwartz or Bob Kane?

No.

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e-mailbag

(continued from page 5)

From: JOHN SEFTON (CTNG67B) PRODIGY®
Subject: Fanboy!!!!!!

Well, after ordering Fanboy:Journal of Comic Fandom (tm, all rights reserved) two months ago, I received my first issue today, courtesy of Suncoast Comics Discount Warehouse, a cool mail-order place down in Bradenton, FL. First impressions....Nice cover...$1.50, not bad..oh, good, I can order a second issue direct, 'cause I didn't see this mag listed in Previews or Advance, other than the first issue.....woah, lotsa words...words suck, huh huh huh huh huh (jus' kidding)...Woah, more cool Donna Matrix stuff...Donna Matrix #1 was bitchin'....I hope Universe of Super-Heroes (the local comic shop) has decided to carry Donna Matrix #2...Alright! Joe "X-0 ZEE-RO" Quesada...Jimmy Palmiotti....oh yeah, Ninjack.....hey, contest! Original Innovation artwork...hmmm..I'm not that big an Innovation fan, but I guess, if I won, I could pass the stuff onto those folks who ALWAYS ask for ANY original artwork in their Comics Buyer's Guide ads..damn I'm on the las' page: paparazzi...what! It's through....hey check out that chick in the cleverly labeled "Photo Number 1"! And...it's that has-been guy (as Mark Spade put it, "Hey I'll say 'I pity the fool..' for 20 bucks....okay, 15. .alright 10, but that's my final offer!")...Cool, Marvel's Marvels in th' nex' issue...the preliminary art was great, the Atlanta DragonCon was where I saw the whole speechless first issue the Marvel rep assured me that it wouldn't be a silent comic, like that issue of Batman oh so long ago)...Lessee..where am I gonna get a buck fifty???...Well..I guess I'll hafta hold up the 7-11. Then again, I've got 'til November!

Well, that's about all. Oh wait, the letter from "Mad Marcus". I guess the guy wants to make sure we know they're not Wizard, or CBG, or...yep, he's right, Fanboy isn't stapled. Well, I guess that's all 'til November, guys! Hey, can I ask your next interviewed guy or gal a question? Well...see ya soon! Lemme know if you get any ground-breaking news out of the next guy ya interview! Reincarnate (a.k.a. mild-mannered John Sefton)

(Letters are taken pretty much "as is" from America Online (Fanboy@aol) and Prodigy (WVSW45A).

Once Upon A Time, There Was This Artist Who Reacquainted A Publishing Company With It's Roots...

Alex In

Alex Ross is, undeniably, the most prolific painter to grace comics today. Trained in fine art, tested and honed in commercial storyboarding, this young (23) talent leaves his drawing board only after he is 100% satisfied with the end results of his work. The results are impressive.

It's detail that makes the Ross style what it is. That, combined with the professional control of a brush or pencil or airbrush makes editors chase him like zombies after fresh meat. Knowing that, Ross focuses on projects that he enjoys. Concepts are discussed, plans are made, forms get signed and the magic begins.

This year's magic overshadows both the resurrected Man Of Steel and the overly dragged-out replacement of Batman. Alex doesn't attempt to compete with them. In fact, he doesn't compete with anyone. He harbors a quiet self-esteem and diligence that all of the hypemeisters simply cannot touch because what he creates comes from effort, sweat, imagination, talent. He strives to bring dignity to the medium, and in his current series for Marvel, Ross succeeds in raising the level of adolescent pulp hero-worship to a new height of Olympian splendor.

Ross is more than an artist, he's a fan, a lover of comics and in undertaking this mini-series of Marvel milestones he lovingly pays tribute to the greats of our youth. Kirby, Ditko, Ayers, Romita, and Stan the Man could receive no better 'thank you' from a devoted follower of their four-color mythology.

It's a Thursday night and Alex needed a few poses in costume to complete the next set of pages of MARVELS. The characters are modeled after real people: art rep Laurie Bradach is Phil's wife, inker Andrew Pepoy is J. Jonah Jameson. I'm Phil, the photographer who chronicles the birth of superheros and their effect on his once safe, predictable world. It is a plot device that allows Alex to highlight the greatest moments in Marvel history from 1939 through the era of mutants.

Mention the names: Gwen Stacy, Galactus, Green Goblin, Professor X, Yancy Street. Let them roll around in your subconscious for a while. Those were better days; everything was new and untried. In Alex's mind, those moments had to be replayed accurately, lavishly.

The northside Chicago apartment is littered with figure references tonight, ranging from the baroque to newsstand muscle magazines. Thumbnail sketches are attached to the script pages, along with post-it notes and side comments.

F: You're using Muscle and Fitness as background stuff. Do you use a lot of swipes?

A: (laughs) No, no. I'm not using this as background stuff. For development of a DC idea I had, I've been figuring out a way to do some of their characters and I want to get an idea of how some body-builders really look, so I needed some more pictures. They don't like anything less than a really, really bulky Superman.

F: I brought up the swipes because I often go to our library and check out stuff like this for swipes. The lighting (on Muscle and Fitness) is excellent for muscle tone.

A: Yeah, but I don't want to make a character look like anything they have here.

Wonderland

Some of these guys, when they're not oiled up, look fine. That's the kind of bulk I would put on the character, but some of the stuff in here I don't know about. It's all veins, it's not muscle. That's the most unattractive thing I can think of, except if you're thinking of the Hulk and in that case, it fits.

(Alex opens up a sketchbook of Superman concepts that he's developing)

Actually, I want to do a Fleisher Superman and I think I can still do a Fleisher-style Superman with this because with body-builders you have a more box-like frame, which was what the original Joe Shuster Superman was, kind of a boxy frame. It's just that he didn't have the "overdevelopment" of muscles. he was just big. I was sketching this at the Torchlight last Thursday night and everybody was making fun of me.

F: Why?

A: Because usually (when the local pros get together on Thursday nights) we draw funny stuff like cartoons and whatnot, and here I am more or less thinking out loud because I want to get around to drawing this, but if I'm home I won't do it because I have to get around to doing my real work.

(Alex returns to the drawing board to mix his watercolors and shows me his MARVELS page from Spider-Man's confrontation with Green Goblin. We shot photos of me as the photographer, Phil, a week earlier and now, as they are being placed, I recall Alex's instructions on movement and facial expressions. I'm confronting a 60's icon).

A: This is my favorite page in the whole third issue because you meet Peter Parker and you see him come in hawking these photographs that make Spider-Man look bad and you give him this glare that just cuts him in half and then you just storm away.

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Gwen dies again in MARVELS issue four.

This series originated with you, right?

A: It all began...here [Alex pulls out a copy of Marvel Age 130, which features several pages]. Painted by Ross and co-written by Steve Darnall, an untested, unknown who, in 1990, worked in Chicago's Comic Relief. Befriending a patron who worked at a nearby ad agency, Darnall would unknowingly make his first real comic industry connection, as well as establish a close personal friendship with a yet unrecognized artist. That artist was Ross and after an attempt at collaboration with a frien fell apart, Steve asked for a chance to try his hand on the story. Their first attempt became the groundwork for MARVELS. Darnall's reputation as a writer and confidant to comic pros would quickly lead to articles in several industry rags and this year would place him with Hero Illustrated.

I turn to view copies of Superman: Doomsday and Beyond, which features Alex's first paperback cover. There is a large store display of the cover and as we discuss this, Alex produces a copy of Superman and Batman magazine, which features a spread on his work. I congratulate him for all of the great press,

Alex Ross sets up the next shot

but Alex demonstrates a typical Ross trait; he flips to the Flash and talks up his admiration of another artist's work. Consistently, Alex will examine and lavishes praise on other artists and writers while keeping his most severe criticism on his own work...or the reproduction of his work. Until now, Alex hasn't been satisfied with the way some of his work printed, but with MARVELS, his attitude has changed.

On Silver Age:

F: We were talking recently about your love of silver age material. Was Romita your biggest influence?

A: I would dare to say he was the very first comic artist who's work I ever saw because the very first comic character I saw was Spidey on The Electric Company and that had illustrations at the beginning that I believe were by Romita. The first comics that my parents would buy for me were Spidey Superstories which had Romita covers. I have a very distinct memory of the very first illustration I ever saw of Peter Parker. It was that Green Goblin cover that had him being dragged across the sky, and I thought, "that can't be Peter Parker! Peter Parker would look more like Keith Partridge or something", and to me that was a horrible letdown. Certainly anybody who drew Spider-Man at that time was influential, but he certainly cemented my image of Spider-Man. If you could say it was any character that drove me into comics, then yes, you could say he was responsible. Other than wanting to BE Spider-Man, I wanted to draw Spider-Man.

F: I think Spider-Man's appeal was as an Everyman, especially to a young and impressionable readership.

A: He was the closest to an ordinary guy you could find in comics. Even though he had super powers, it didn't affect his life so much. You couldn't look up to Johnny Storm. Johnny Storm still lived with this rich inventor and his family.

F: There was always an ironic twist to Spider-Man stories. In spite of his powers, he still ran out of film, he still had a lousy job, he still got picked on and he still had Aunt May.

F: So, did you ever say to yourself that if you could do your dream book you would do all of these characters in one big series?

A: Oh yeah! As early as I KNEW there were a bunch of characters, I could envision having them all in one book. The books I used to buy were the ones that featured as many characters as possible, so group books like the Avengers and the Justice League were a big thing for me. Crisis being the pinnacle of all of that. To do something like Crisis which involved sticking as many characters as you can in one series was my greatest goal. Anything more focussed didn't allow you more scope.

F: As a kid, did you focus on any one character, like Spider-Man or Fantastic Four or Dr. Strange, or did you read all of the silver titles?

A: Well, we're also talking here about having to focus on the broad scope because of the financial situation. My parents could NOT afford to buy me every monthly book. I had interests in everybody and since I couldn't get all those books, or even a handful of them, I basically would try to grab on to any material that was out there that would allow me the broadest knowledge of the Marvel universe or the DC universe, for that matter.

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From the original pencils at 100% scale: the Surfer arrives in New York

F: Marvel, at that stage, was into heavy continuation.

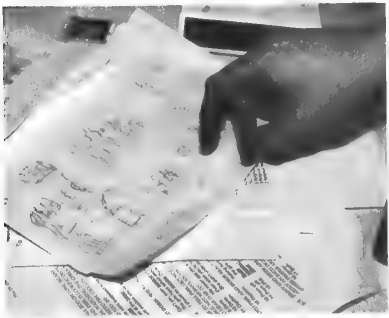
A: Right, so any comic I had of Marvels...well, I only had half the story.

F: You were in the middle of something ALL of the time.

A: Well, one of the definite memories I have is being six years old and having that issue of Marvel Tales that reprinted the appearance of the Prowler. The cover had him shooting out some blaster rays at Spider-Man and Spider-Man jumping out of the way really quickly. I remember having that distinctly as a kid because in that issue you never see Spider-Man much at all. You see Prowler fighting Peter Parker and they leave you hanging at the end with a real cliff-hanger ending and I never had the second issue. Weird things like that can really screw you up as a kid, because your parents can't go out and get these things for you. They don't have the time or the money...

F: I remember the old Strange Tales. I was a big fan of the old Nick Fury as Kirby and

Explaining the scene with script and thumbnails, Alex tells the kids they'll be playing catch with a runaway mutant child.



No, that's not a scene from the Addams Family. It's Alex walking us through shots.

Severin and the old bullpen were doing him and Ditko was doing Dr. Strange as the back-up feature and I remember the frustration of not getting one or another crucial issue.

But the era was so different. It was such a joy to walk into some Ma and Pa place and hope that they had the titles you were looking for. It wasn't like now when you know it is Thursday night and you run down to the store where they reserve books for you, much less in plastic and in mint shape.

A: Yeah. It's so very calculated now.

On Reinterpreting Silver Epics

A: Speaking of which, Kurt and I are going to fit you into this panel in the fourth issue during this whole Goblin thing.

Alex sifted past several boards on his table and pulled out pencils of a crowd scene, and then pulled open Gil Kane's Spider-Man issue following Gwen Stacy's death.

It was eerie, almost, it would seem, predestined that Alex, Kurt Busiek and I would open this page and find ourselves looking face-to-face with my character, Phil Sheldon, centered in a crowd, witnessing Spider-Man's raging confrontation with the Green Goblin. Alex pointed it out. There was the same hat, the look, the glasses and even more ominous, if you looked through his glasses it was clear that he was missing an eye. Creepy? Was it coincidence or perhaps fate playing itself out visually as a kind of sign-post to Alex? How intriguingly odd that a young man's finest hour in 1993 would have such a strange link with a tiny image almost two decades old.

Not just reruns of classic moments

F: So, as you're doing this project, you are really pulling up existing images and redoing them?

A: No, not all the time. Did that a lot in the Fantastic Four issue with Galactus, though.

F: You have a real love of Kirby's gadgets don't you?

A: I was trying to go to a real Geiger-esque/Kirby marriage of style.

Fact: In three different reprints, Galactus had three different color costumes.

F: He's got gloves on page 65 of the annual...

A: I have the original colors from Kurt Busiek, and that's what I tried to stay with. Considering that this is the original color and they changed it immediately in the next issue, they really didn't know what they had in mind.

F: Would you be interested in illustrating any of Marvel's regular books? It's clear that you have a real love of the Fantastic Four...

A: Yeah, I would be interested in illustrating all of the rest of the supporting villains and whatnot, but if it had to be done under the current style, I would hate it. I don't like what they're doing right now.

F: They're not interested in doing a "retro" style reminiscent of early Kirby?

A: Wait, not everything about this [MARVELS] is retro, either.

F: I don't want to say "nostalgic" , but..."classic".

A: Yeah, but I don't think it's necessary to have the Invisible Girl look like she's a girl from the sixties with that certain hairstyle or something. The villains haven't really changed their costumes or their look, but the way that they've changed the Fantastic Four themselves, you know, the Thing wearing a mask...I mean...The Human Torch wearing a vest -a VEST that you can see while he's on fire? Why? Why? That's ridiculous! Marvel's completely screwed over the Human Torch as a character because here's this character that on it's own ...it's a MAN on FIRE. He was HUGE in the World War II era. Kill him off, bring him back, he's a kid, he's only a small member of this big group, and he never regains his former glory. All we identify him with now is as this young kid character who's as lame as all hell.

Hidden in the crowd/60's Icons/The Wedding Scene

We look over the original pencils for the chapel splash page featuring Sue and Reed tying the knot and the image is, as always, impressively stacked with detail. There are several photographers snapping away in the aisle, and Alex reminds me that all of them were me. There is a real collector's collection of famous faces here, including a few real surprises.

A: the funny thing about this is that this sequence with Nick Fury talking to the black guy is originally from the book. He's actually pointing back toward the doors to some guys who were trying to get in and they don't have an invitation; that's what he's telling Nick. And what they go back there to confront is Jack Kirby and Stan Lee (we crack up). I'm actually alluding to that in there. That page got changed a little, it got improved with the painting a lot.

F: That's Mary Tyler Moore and Dick Van Dyke in front of J. Jonah Jameson?

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The Surfer's boss from book 3

A: I have the Beatles in this scene, but I've improved their likenesses a lot [from these first pencils]. There's other things, like, I widened Captain America's shoulders a great deal.

F: The blind girl is Alicia, right?

A: Right.

F: Did you use Linda...

A: Hamilton? Yeah.

A: Generally for the Galactus story, everything was changed. Angles were changed, points of view were changed, but there were so many cases where it was, ok, here's the image we're redoing, I can't really see too many ways to do it differently from the way he already did.

F: Is that Don Knotts in this other crowd? [In snooping around his scattered clippings and photos, I find out that Alex used stills from How To Frame A Fig as reference].

A: Yeah, a true Knotts classic. Look at this one: here's where I fit in the Monkees...Mike, Davey, Peter and Mickey. That's my mom in there...

A: Here's the shot of Galactus when he gets knocked off the building, but he's actually suspended in mid-air. It's really the same, maybe just deeper, that's all. [For accurate detailing and lighting purposes, Alex built the Galactus headgear from fomecore and cardboard. Looking now at the completed battle pages, the effort paid off handsomely].

We wrapped the photo shoot for the night and when we talk again, Alex talks history.

How the MARVELS project really came about.

F: The original concept for MARVELS was yours.

Did you and Kurt develop the idea together?

A: Well, it should be stated somewhere, I think, that originally when I approached him, he was like, "Boy, this artwork looks great [but] you have no ideas here, no story." I said, "it's not necessarily a story, it's an anthology series I want to pitch." He was coming in from a point of view that anthology series do not work, or at least they don't work at Marvel. Anthology series erupt because they have this excess of material that they want to put into some format and all of a sudden an anthology is created. They don't necessarily get pitched, but then again, what about Hellraiser. Hellraiser is an anthology, it's new, it isn't old stories. They were commissioned. So, I wanted to do a Hellraiser series, basically, with that quality and that format but with Marvel's characters in it. And that would sell like mad...how could it not?

F: Sure.

A: Especially if they had the kind of talent that they had for all of that early Hellraiser stuff. But, he [Kurt] had said to me, "I would be interested in working out anything you might have in mind." But, he wanted to produce this pitch for Iron Man instead because he knew at the time the editorial and creative ends of Iron Man were changing hands and he figured [it

was a] perfect opportunity for a new creative team. And so, we did a proposal. I did two pen and ink pages of page art and one cover painting, the idea being that I would paint every cover and just draw the insides. Luckily, that never happened because now I'm going to be thought of as just a painted artist and I couldn't be happier with it, really. I'd rather have the painted work 'cause ultimately, doing pencil and ink stuff, you're just going to fall through the cracks if everybody else is doing it. Well...not really. There are people who glow above and beyond, even brand new people getting into the field, but still it's like, you set yourself into a much more limited grouping when you go to painted art. So anyway, we produced that. Didn't hear about that pitch for many months, but I produced that work right away. Kurt and I basically did not discuss anything further about pulling ideas together for this pitch. We were both very busy. He, in the meantime had been showing my samples around and I had been given an offer to do a Miracleman short story and so I wasn't necessarily breathing down his neck to pull ideas together for this Marvel pitch. But basically, if I could state it any way, he was not really interested in that pitch. He didn't really see the point in this point of view of all these different stories. The Human Torch story; he was not impressed by the 12 page Human Torch story I did. He thought that the art was fine, but he thought the script was just horrendous. He hated it. (chuckles) The script that Steve [Darnall] and I produced. (breaks into a laugh) Which is now being published in the pages of Marvel Age [130-].

F: Opinions are things we learn to eat.

A: Anyway then, miracle of miracles, pages that pitched as just my regular samples of artwork were with them at Eclipse. Eclipse wanted me to do some Clive Barker stories, which I didn't have a big interest in, as I'm not a big horror fan. I used to be, as a kid. They showed the samples first to Clive Barker without ever mentioning anything to the artist. If Clive likes you, then they go and say, "would you like to do this?" Clive liked them so much that he took them with him and showed them to an editor at Marvel -my current editor [Marc McLaurin], and said, "let's get him to do Hellraiser." Al of a sudden, Eclipse kind of lost out and I wound up with bigger job offers. So, I did that issue of Hellraiser and blahblahblah... Essentially, when that editor at Marvel called me up, he was interested in, "do this Hellraiser, yeahyeahyeah, but what the heck are these samples? Did we print this? If not, let's do it." Then he says, "this is part of a proposal?" and I said, "part of a proposal that I shelved under Kurt's guidance. He really didn't have an interest in it."

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"Be sure to cover your eyes, dear!" Of course, he doesn't. Thanks to a flying brick there'll be no more 3-D movies for Phil after this gig!

F: Can I say that?

A: Sure. It was shelved not necessarily under his guidance, but he didn't really encourage it and he was the one person I knew as an authority figure from Marvel. I had originally gone into creating the whole proposal with the idea that I was going to paper their offices with this stuff. Send it out to whoever I knew the names of and see if anybody wanted to do it, figuring somebody would look at it and say, "we SHOULD do this." That's more or less what happened...by accident. So I sent a rough summery of what I had in mind which was basically, "hey, I want to do these short stories. These are the characters I want to do them around. It's as simple as that." Sent it to my editor and he said, "hey, sounds great." Well then I said, "can I have Kurt Busiek[1] write it?" and I suggested Kurt at that point because Kurt and I had talked about it. He was the last person I had talked about it with creatively, and he was the only professional writer that I knew and I wasn't about to search out another friend of mine personally to work with and I'd also come to the conclusion at that point that if you can work at all within the medium, you're probably already doing it. You've probably already hoed your own road into it, and Steve Darnall did not have enough interest in Marvel to do the series, but he was offered it.

F: Really!?!

A: Yes, he was offered it at a very early stage.

F: How long have you known Steve?

A: Since '90. He was in Comic Relief[2] back when the Terminator series had come out. So I knew him shortly before I started this idea, but he was not my first thought because he did not really have an interest in Marvel strongly. We were really DC heads, but the reason I was doing this was because I thought, "hey, DC's doing such great stuff they don't need me. Marvel needs better material."

F: And you gave it to them.

A: And now they're doing a sequel to my series.

F: Are they really?

A: Oh, yeah.

F: So it's definitely...

A: It's more than definitely. They've already got the artist for it, Kurt has already done the breakdown for it.

F: Is Phil [my character] in it?

A: No. This does not involve Phil.

F: Phil's kids?

A: No...no.

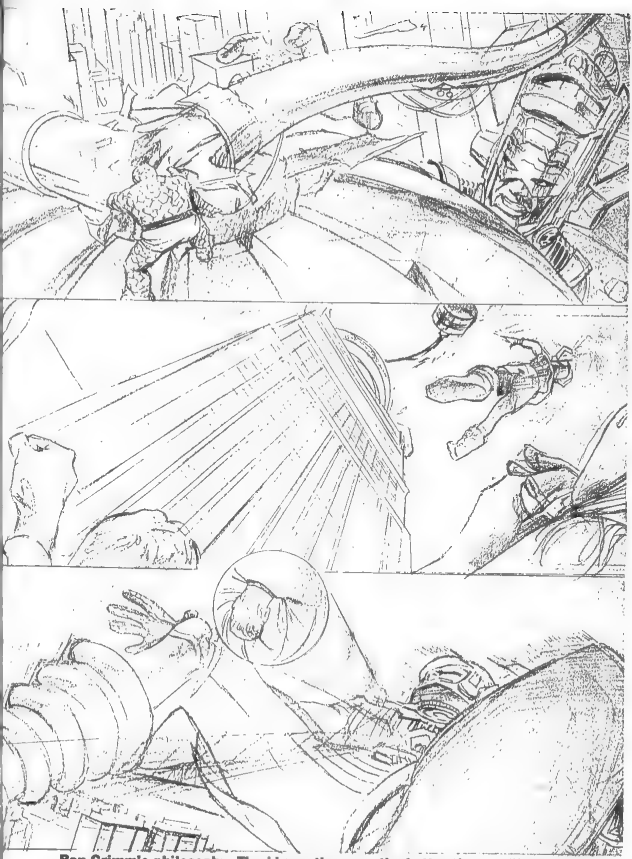
F: Phil and the Blanks. New heroes who can sing.

[The sequel is called MARVELS: Cops And Robbers, another 48-page, 4-issue series to be painted by Tristan Schane.]

A: Basically, Kurt did not have the interest to do the sequel. He wanted to leave it at the end right here [of MARVELS]. That's what Kurt wanted, that's what I wanted. We felt that we had said what we wanted to about the Marvel universe with this first series, but he realized that if somebody else -another writer- comes in there, they'll want to do a sequel with your character which is ridiculous because you retire at the end of the fourth book. You're an old guy! You're jaded. You don't care about anything anymore. Galactus could step into your living room and you'd be like, "hmm, that's nice." You've lost your sense of wonder, there's no reason why your character would continue on.

F: The sense of wonder is really the central point of the whole series, isn't it?

A: To the first series, yeah. With the second series they take it a closer step inside. The second series is based around the idea of a pair of brothers who...one digresses into the criminal aspect of the Marvel universe and the other progresses to the law-enforcement aspect of the Marvel universe and it reflects the two differing points of view from there; one's a petty criminal, one's a cop. They both gravitate to their self-appointed destinies. One goes to the FBI, the other goes to AIM then you eventually end up with the good guy becoming a SHIELD operative, which is the highest law enforcement...



Ben Grimm's philosophy: The bigger they are, the better they go "boom". Three panels from the showdown between the FF and Galactus: top panel has Ben taking a swing at old metal-head while in panel two, Reed rolls one home. With paint applied, each book took over 3 months to complete.

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F: And the other goes to HYDRA?

A: At one point, I think so. But there are so many different groups there, I think he goes through all of them, like AIM, the Hellfire Club, which is in the X-Men plotlines. Anyway, they cover all of the 70's and 80's and the current hot Marvel characters like the Punisher, Ghost Rider, Wolverine. It's stuff that I couldn't care less to illustrate. There are some really good stories in there, but I think they're really going to focus on stuff that's really popular.

F: Were you drawing this for yourself or were you thinking about the mass market?

A: Oh, I went into this thinking that this is more important than me. This work has a life well beyond me and my interests, I think. It happened to fall completely within things that I care about. It's something that's bigger than the both of us; that kind of thing.

F: These stories that you're retelling were very influential to a generation of readers. These were the books that I grew up with and I think you've touched a nerve with many former readers who may have given up comics when they became very, what's the word, "formula". I mean, everything I learned about morality grew from -or around- these Marvel heroes. You knew that you didn't have to have powers or anything special to be somebody special. We shared common feelings with these characters; everything they did was very new and we were all so new to the world, too.

A: Yeah, that's a funny thing. The same would be with me, but here, I've got a father who is a minister, a preacher, but I gained my sense of right and wrong and all of that from comics. He was a preacher in terms of going to church every Sunday, he wasn't a preacher at home, so all my morality stems from Spider-Man and whoever.

F: They lived by certain codes.

A: Yeah, and there were certain impressions that they made.

F: And Spider-Man was growing up with us, so he was always questioning...

A: He was always learning his sense of morality. It wasn't like it was already there when he started. His was growing...even though it's been 30 years and it's still growing (laughs).

F: So, he's slow...

A: Well, to break down that pitch thing even tighter, when Kurt was approached with it, I called him up and he was like, "you're kidding! They're interested?" And then he called up the editor and found out I wasn't lying to him. The editor wanted to do this series. They wanted to push it through Marvel, but there's this long, exhaustive process you've got to go through when pitching a series. We went through it, we pitched something that fit in all of the short stories that I had in mind, which weren't that many, and Kurt fit in a few more, basically fleshing out all the other characters I didn't want to do from the silver age. Like, I didn't have any ideas for the silver age X-Men or Thor or the Hulk. I thought that I was picking out central characters that were truly, completely original concepts like the very first black superhero, the Black Panther. I wanted to do a story on him. The first - maybe not the very first, but one of the most influential characters who died very shocking, very unexpectedly within a continuing series who was a big part of that series. That was Gwen Stacy. Aspects like that were what I thought made these characters completely original, and Torch and Sub-Mariner go without saying. The Thing, Ben Grimm. He was the very first *sshole superhero, I thought. A regular Joe Normal, he was just as nasty and awful as anyone you'd know. He has all the worst vices of everybody you'd know.

F: He smoked cigars, he wore bad suits definitely Yancy Street, "Joe"-type suits. I think that he, along with the old Nick Fury -Sgt. Fury- reflected a lot of Kirby's personality[3].

A: Anyway, we fit all these stories around these characters and still we weren't pitching an anthology. That's the one difference from my original idea. My editor and Kurt both thought that an ongoing anthology won't work, so it's got to be a limited series. So, basically, we were using that whole character of the photographer as the link, which I really think is a cheap link.

F: Woddia mean?

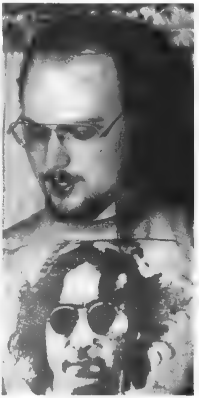
A: What he was is a thinly-veiled disguise getting us around from story to story because the stories were more important than the link. Tom DeFalco read the concept and said, "this is fine, this is approved but I want these changes. I want you guys to stick to what you set out to do which was to give this outsider's perspective to the Marvel universe which you're not really doing because you're getting the central character to know the central superheros and that would not happen in a real outsider's perspective." That was the first thing he [DeFalco] said. The second thing, the major thing I remember was that we shouldn't have these continuity implant stories. We should have him actually responding to real events in the Marvel universe. At first, I thought we were screwed, we were dead. Kurt had the inspiration to turn the whole series around. So, essentially what we pitched in the beginning was exactly what I had in mind before I even approached Kurt, but what we came out with after the entire process was played out was something that was truly Kurt. This is where Kurt took over. Kurt fit in things that I wanted, but basically, the series was his. That's how your character became the sole focus of the series. Once you read it, you realize that this is a perspective...this is so -I hate to say that word again- important. It's something that hasn't really and truly been explored. You think it has because every superhero comic has supporting characters and you think you've seen all of this kind of perspective before, but you really haven't. You really haven't until you read the perspective of somebody who doesn't know any of these characters, just lives in that universe and how all of these events come across to the average man.... these feelings of helplessness, of adoration, feelings of hate. The whole nine yards. You have no idea until you sit down and think it out. And that's how we presented it. It's not that we get everything that there is, we just touch upon a lot of things. It's more like we present a germ of an idea to you. As I am illustrating these events, I'm inspired with many more far-reaching implications of the ideas, you know, how much farther this extended into the lives of these people. So, anyway, that's how your character became such an enormous part of it. And I had been envisioning, even before I had talked to Kurt, this reporter/link character and originally I based it on this friend who I was putting the series together with. He actually looks like a younger version of you.

F: (I laugh) Thanks loads.

A: Well, with strong, strong differences, but with a very similar feel, a very similar thing that the two of you have. Basically, I was hunting around. I was looking for "this guy". It's so goofy when you think about it. Here I am, hanging around with friends, just sort of looking at everybody thinking, "hmm..."

F: I remember that evening. You were looking around the place like this [I imitate Alex with hand on chin, eyebrow arched, and staring].

A: Oh, jeez...



"I went into this thinking that this is more important than me. This work has a life well beyond me and my interests."

F: Yes you were!

A: No, I wasn't, was I?

F: You were studying everybody in the room.

A: Actually, I think it was the party that Howard and Laurie first went to. You were there, Joe was there. That was the very first meeting that Steve[4] went to, I think. And I had gotten to talk to you further and I'd already found out that you had two young daughters that were the exact ages of the daughters we had planned for the series. I was going for this very "ordinary guy" look. Luckily, I picked right.

...Yer one'a us now, kid...

F: Thanks.

A: Oh, you had nothing to do with it, it just turned out that you were one of the easiest people to draw. I picked the worst for the wife. I picked the hardest person in the world to draw for your wife.

F: Who posed with a mannequin for all of the kissing scenes. She wanted me to throw that in.

A: (laughing) Oh, did she?

F: I figure I'd better say that. I already lost one eye to the Marvel Universe; I don't want to lose another...

Closing notes from a member of the Merry Marvel Marching Society

Well, things have a way of coming full-circle in life. I began my love affair with Marvel at 10 and later joined the Merry Marvel Marching Society at the bargain rate of 69¢. At 39, I'm still marching.

When Alex and I pored over boxes and boxes of my old, weathered, water-damaged and musty comics from the late 50's and 60's, it was a wonderful, nostalgic trip for me and an archeological dig for Alex. I never really pondered what it was like to go from a fan to a member of the Marvel universe, but here we are and here we'll stay.

My children are part of this Universe, too. I wonder if, twenty-five years from now, they'll open those books and share them with another generation of Marvel fans. If I'm still on this earth, it would be a thrill to pass my old collection to some wide-eyed youngsters and hopefully, open their imaginations the way mine was opened so many years ago. When I'm older and greyer, we'll have to see if Alex's predictions of my future wrinkles come to pass accurately. Maybe they will, maybe they won't. Perhaps, in the twilight of my life, a comet will streak across northern skies and it's intergalactic properties will renew my youth and give me a cosmic link to a greater destiny. You never know. Anything can happen when you're in the Marvel Universe.

FANBOY!

Footnotes

1 Kurt Busiek's credits include Silver Star and TeenAgents for Topps, Darkman and Web of Spider-Man for Marvel, Vampirella for Harris.

2 A Chicago-area 3-store chain.

3 Alex confided that he used Jack Kirby as the model for his Ben Grimm.

4 Howard is Kim "Howard" Johnson, author/Comics Scene writer/radio host. Laurie Is Laurie Bradach, agent to Joe Quesada and publisher/gallery owner. Steve is Steve Darnall, now with Hero Illustrated. Joe is Joseph Allen, colorist, letterer for Now, Malibu, Comico, Gladstone as well as musician/artist for Reactor/Digital Comics. The meeting was one of the first organized Chicago-area gatherings of published comic pros.

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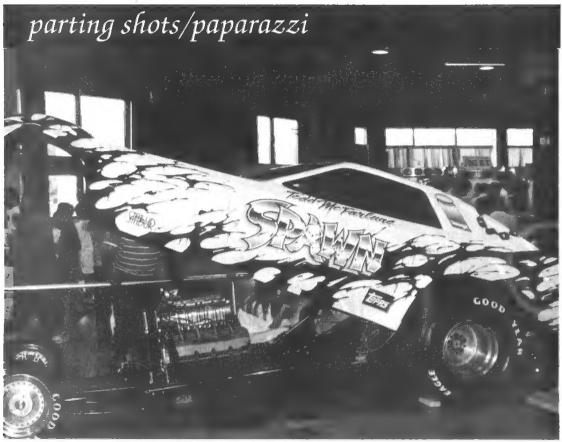


Mr. McFarlane, your 15 minutes are up.

Defiantly thumbing his nose at the mainstream just two years ago, Todd McFarlane wasted no time in forming his own company and delivering what fandom wanted: a new hot title. Exquisitely drawn, it boasted proudly and rightfully, that Spawn was the new leader in town. And it made Todd wealthy, God bless him, by turning freelancers into free-agents. The promise was to get new and original material out there, so a lot of comic creatives cheered and applauded his groundbreaking zeal. But wait, something began to change. Deadlines at Image began to fall by the wayside. Todd used the "F word" in Comics Journal and fans began to step back a bit. It wasn't long before Image, those saviors of the medium, became the mainstream. The company became a clique. A parody of Spawn put Todd's ego in higher gear and the book bit the dust faster than lightning. A verbal battle with comic and B-movie writer Peter David became big news; someone dared to stand up to McFarlane. What could possibly be next?

We received e-mail over AOL recently asking us when we'd be doing an interview with the Image guys. We responded "never if we can help it".

For every one McFarlane there are a dozen Sheldon Moldoffs, Jerry Robinsons, Curt Swans, Alex Toths. These are the people who struggled to earn copper while creating gold. With company like that, who *needs* another Image article? FANBOY!

Two Investments.

Château de Rothschild. Full bodied taste and bouquet. Vintage 1961.

Fantastic Four No. 1
Very first—near mint condition.
Vintage 1961.

This one is supposed to age.

This one isn't.

Your customer's comic book collection may be his or her proudest possession. Today's smart collectors know the best way to preserve their comics is to store them in a cool, dark, dry place. To further protect them from insects, pets, young family members, household accidents, general handling and storage— collectors place their books in protective packaging.

Comic shop retailers must offer a complete selection of collecting supplies. Moondog's **ComiCare™ Investment Protection System** offers retailers competitively priced, quality merchandise they may sell with complete confidence. We believe there is no better value available to the retailer on the market today!

Our company philosophy is simple: **Collectors deserve the best tools available!**

Moondog's ComiCare™ products are designed and priced so you may offer your customers a great set of tools with which to build a first-rate collection.

Moondog's has been the leading producer of American-made collecting supplies for over a decade. Since 1981 we've sold nearly one-half billion **ComiCovers™** brand bags. Unlike our competitors' cheap foreign-made bags, **ComiCovers™** are manufactured according to the highest quality manufacturing practices available today. We continually seek new ideas and materials that will ensure that our products will be the fine that your customers ask for by name.

At **Moondog's** we recognize that building a successful wholesale business takes more than merely manufacturing a good product—the customer must always get great service. Our customer service department is the backbone of our business. Our central warehouse has a huge inventory of all our **ComiCare™** brand products ready to ship anywhere on a moment's notice. On those occasions when you need wholesale supplies *fast*—don't panic! Call us on our toll-free 800 number or FAX us and we guarantee your order will be shipped the following day!

Reputations are not easily earned in this volatile, competitive business. In the past decade we've seen our competitors come and go. Some offered gimmicks, others spouted scientific mumbo-jumbo. But not one of them came close to surpassing **ComiCovers'** winning sales record. Our business grew and prospered because we earned the respect of our many repeat customers. These retailers learned to rely on our innovative products, reasonable pricing, dedication to customer service and Moondog's Total Satisfaction Guarantee: **If for any reason you are not fully satisfied with our ComiCare™ brand products, then simply return them for a full refund!**

ComiCare™

INVESTMENT PROTECTION SYSTEM

ComiCovers™ are available at most Diamond Comic Distributors, Capital City Distribution, Heroes World Distribution, Comics Unlimited Distributors, Action Direct Distributors and Friendly Frank's Distribution warehouses.

ComiCovers™

• 2 great varieties!
• 4 popular sizes!

3 mil, pure virgin POLYETHYLENE

Quality American Manufacturing!
No more annoying variations in width or depth.

Color coded sizes!
Allows quick visual identification.

Re-sealable outer wrapper!
No more loose bags hassles.

2 mil, pure virgin POLYPROPYLENE

Accurate counts!
Pre-counted in 100s. Saves you time & money.

Unconditionally guaranteed!
If for any reason you are not satisfied, return the products for a full refund.

Packed flat!
No more unsightly creases or folds.

Modern	Reg/Silver Age	Golden Age	Magazine
6⅞" x 10½" x 1½"	7⅛" x 10½" x 1½"	7½" x 10½" x 1½"	8½" x 11" x 1½"
$20 per 1,000 MIN: 24,000	**$22** per 1,000 MIN: 10,000	**$25** per 1,000 MIN: 2,000	**$30** per 1,000 MIN: 1,000	**$33** per 1,000 MIN: 2,000

Mix and Match! Call for quantity discount pricing.

ComiCards™

• Standard of the Industry!
• Perfect fit to ComiCovers!
• White on both sides!
• Uncreditionally guaranteed!
• Bulk carton of 1,000

All white, virgin backer boards.

Modern	Reg/Silver Age	Golden Age	Magazine
6⅞" x 10½"	7" x 10½"	7½" x 10½"	8½" x 11"
$35 per 1,000 MIN: 5,000	**$38** per 1,000 MIN: 2,000	**$40** per 1,000 MIN: 1,000	**$45** per 1,000 MIN: 500	**$50** per 1,000 MIN: 500

Call for quantity discount pricing.

DIAMOND GEM BACKING BOARDS

Modern	Reg./Silver Age
6⅞" X 10½"	7" X 10½"
$40 per 1,000 Minimum 5,000	**$45** per 1,000 Minimum: 1,000

Each case equals 10 bales of 100.

- Pure white virgin material.
- All white on both sides!
- Comics are pre-counted in 100s (make a sturdy, square package).
- When box is empty, it can be recycled as a collectors storage box—it even has lined spaces for title, issue number, publisher and volume number on the side of the box! SORRY, NO MIX OR MATCH.

Other collection protection products available—Mylar and Title Dividers. Call our toll-free number for wholesale pricing.

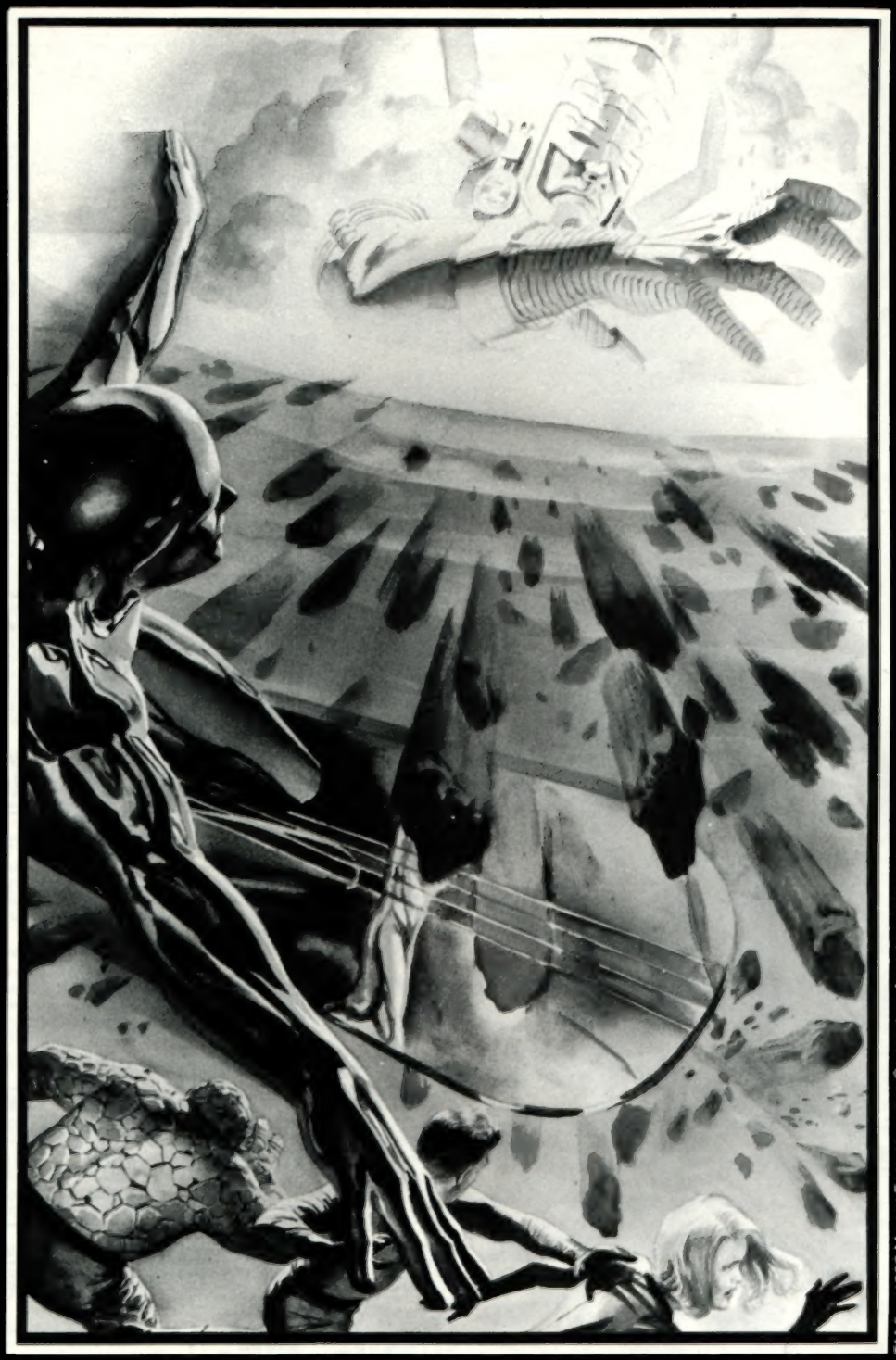
Moondog's

1201 Oakton Street • Elk Grove Village, IL 60007 • FAX: 708-805-6177

Call Toll Free: 1-800-344-6060

Unlike most suppliers, Moondog's welcomes your business check in advance or COD. We also accept VISA, MASTERCARD, DISCOVER, and AMERICAN EXPRESS and we give credit after you establish an account with us and supply us with references. All new non-business accounts must pay cash or use a credit card. No CODs. Sorry. As far as shipping goes—UPS is the best, but if an alternate means is your preference, especially on large orders, we'll work it out. You only pay the exact freight to your door. No hidden charges.

FANBOY • • FANBOY



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THE MARVEL UNIVERSE AS SEEN BY THE MAN ON THE STREET.

M·A·R·V·E·L·S

BY KURT BUSIEK AND ALEX ROSS

A FULLY-PAINTED BOOKSHELF LIMITED SERIES BEGINNING IN NOVEMBER